PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN

07-08

ANNUAL REPORT

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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This Annual Report is also available in electronic format (pdf) from the Ministry's website at: **www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca.**

Letters of Transmittal

The Honourable Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart
Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

May It Please Your Honour:

I respectfully submit the Annual Report of the Ministry of Social Services for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

This report provides a description of progress during a year of transition to the new government's strategic direction and priorities. Within the Ministry of Social Services, we continue to review our programs and processes with a view to making them more efficient and effective. This may result in changes in the coming months.

Our government was elected on the values of growth, security and fulfilling our promises. We believe that all Saskatchewan people should enjoy the benefits of the province's economic momentum. Therefore, we must make decisions today that will secure a bright and prosperous future for our citizens tomorrow.

Within the Ministry of Social Services, many of our clients and their families are especially vulnerable, and many lack the skills and training needed to move from the margins of society. We believe those who are able to move into the mainstream workforce should have both the opportunity and the access to the skills development and training necessary to make that move. They should also have access to the supports needed to help make that transition.

We are committed to accountability and ensuring we deliver on our commitments, and we have made progress toward both of these goals since taking office in November. This report will provide some detail on our progress to-date within the Ministry, and we will continue to work toward delivering on our promises.

Donna Harpauer
Minister of Social Services

The Honourable Donna Harpauer
Minister of Social Services

Dear Minister:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of the Ministry of Social Services for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

Duncan Fisher
Deputy Minister

Introduction

This Annual Report describes the accomplishments and performance of the Ministry of Social Services for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. The Ministry uses this information to assess progress and to inform and improve on future plans and actions.

The current report follows the government-wide requirements for reporting on performance measures and accomplishments of public commitments made by the Ministry during the 2007-08 year. This report was prepared at a time of transition to a new government's agenda and will provide reporting on public commitments made during 2007-08.

The key actions originally presented in our 2007-08 Plan are provided, organized by key program areas and followed by a report on actual progress. Information is included for all key actions and performance measures published in the 2007-08 Performance Plan, as well as for all commitments related to the Minister's mandate. Unless otherwise indicated, this report presents actual program and financial data and results at year-end for March 31, 2008.

Since the election in November 2007, the new government undertook changes that affected the Ministry. In November 2007, the Department of Community Resources became the Ministry of Social Services. This change is reflected in the Ministry's 2007-08 Annual Report.

Ministry Overview

With about 2,000 employees and a budget of more than $600 million, Social Services is one of the largest ministries in the Saskatchewan government. The Ministry also includes the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), a provincial Crown corporation with about 31,000 social and affordable rental and homeowner housing units. Social Services provides income support programs for low-income families and seniors, social assistance programs for people out-of-work, housing supports, and programs and services to support families and people with disabilities.

Mandate

The Ministry supports citizens at-risk as they work to build better lives for themselves through economic independence, strong families and strong community organizations. The Ministry assists these efforts through income support, child and family services, supports for persons with disabilities, efforts to develop affordable housing, and help for victims of domestic and sexual assault, and builds greater capacity in community-based organizations.

Service Delivery

The Ministry delivers most of its programs through five regional offices and 20 local service centres. This regional approach allows programs and services to be delivered locally, with an understanding of local conditions. Similarly, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation works with local housing authorities and community agencies. SHC has operations offices in four regions, including the North.

Initial application to the range of the Ministry's financial assistance programs is through a central, telephone-based Contact Centre. The Centre is the first point of contact for low-income people applying for income assistance from the Ministry. Contact Centre staff determine if the applicants are eligible for assistance, then direct new applicants to the appropriate Ministry programs.

Social Services also funds hundreds of community-based organizations (CBOs) to deliver programs and services on its behalf. These independent organizations form an important part of the human services system by addressing local issues and needs. Services range from group homes for people with disabilities to mobile crisis units and meal programs for low-income children.

Income Assistance

The Ministry offers a range of programs for low-income individuals and families to help them meet basic financial needs and additional costs they may incur as they become self-sufficient. Staff situated in a central Contact Centre and local income assistance workers deliver these programs. These programs provide additional income, housing and health benefits, and help improve the quality of life for low-income, working families. The programs include:

Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP)

The *Saskatchewan Assistance Program* (SAP) is a program of last resort for families and individuals who, for various reasons including disability, illness, unemployment or low income, cannot meet their basic needs. Any person who is in financial need may apply for the program through the Contact Centre. Once basic eligibility is determined, people are referred to their nearest income assistance office.

People who apply for SAP must provide proof of their need for assistance and must report any changes in their circumstances, such as getting a job or having a child. People who receive SAP have access to support that will help them develop a plan to increase their independence by reducing barriers.

Transitional Employment Allowance

The *Transitional Employment Allowance* (TEA) provides short-term financial assistance to people with basic financial needs. The program helps individuals while they participate in employment services or pre-employment services and training. TEA also provides temporary assistance to those who have a known date for employment or are receiving Employment Insurance benefits or some other form of financial support.

TEA is administered centrally by the Contact Centre. TEA is a flat-rate benefit, which provides more flexibility than SAP, where clients must report costs. Recipients are expected to budget their TEA benefits to meet their monthly household needs.

Saskatchewan Employment Supplement

The Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES) is administered through the Contact Centre. The monthly SES payments help families with the child-related costs of working (child care,

transportation, etc.). Families must have earnings of at least $125 during the month to qualify for SES.

SES payments increase as family income rises, until that income reaches a maximum amount (the maximum increases with family size). This provides an incentive for families to earn additional income or enforce maintenance agreements. This feature helps SES to reduce the need for families to turn to SAP or TEA for support.

SES benefits also increase based on the number of children in the family, from a one-child family to a family with five or more children. Additional benefits are available for children under 13 because of the higher costs for the care of young children.

Families receiving SES automatically qualify for the Family Health Benefits (FHB), administered by Saskatchewan Health, which help reduce the costs of health services for children.

Saskatchewan Income Plan

The *Saskatchewan Income Plan* (SIP) provides a monthly supplement for seniors who have little or no income other than the federal Old Age Security (OAS) pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). No separate application is required to receive payments from SIP because the program is co-ordinated with the income tax system. The level of benefit depends on the amount of GIS a pensioner receives.

Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement

The *Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement* (SRHS) is a supplement paid to eligible low-income families or persons with disabilities to promote access to safe, affordable, and quality housing. SRHS is administered through the Contact Centre and consists of the Family Housing Supplement and the Disability Housing Supplement. The Family Housing Supplement is available to low-income families who live in rental accommodation and have children under the age of 18. Supplements are based on a sliding scale that varies according to family size and household income. The home must meet basic standards, in order to qualify.

Eligibility for the Disability Housing Supplement is open to all tenant households – including single individuals, couples without children, and families with children – as long as one member of the household has a physical or cognitive disability that creates a special housing need. The necessary supports such as ramps, support bars, etc. must already be in place to qualify for the supplement.

Discount Bus Pass Program

The *Discount Bus Pass Program* is available to those in receipt of the Saskatchewan Assistance Program, Transitional Employment Allowance, Saskatchewan Employment Supplement and Provincial Training Allowance (administered by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour) for $15 in most centres ($20 in Saskatoon). The bus passes are available in the communities of Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Swift Current and Yorkton.

People wishing to purchase a discounted bus pass must visit their local transit authority office. Proof of income support from one of the above programs must be provided.

Child Care Subsidy

The *Child Care Subsidy Program* helps families meet the monthly costs of licensed child care by reducing the fees charged to eligible parents. Subsidies are based on a sliding scale and adjusted for family income, size of family, type of service (full or part-time), age of child, location of the child care facility and child care fee.

Child care subsidies are paid directly to child care centres or family child care homes. Parents are responsible for paying the remaining child care fees. Families receiving income assistance through the Saskatchewan Assistance Program or Transitional Employment Allowance may be eligible for subsidies to cover the entire fee.

Application forms are available from licensed child care facilities, from the Child Care Subsidy Office or from the Ministry's website under Forms and Publications.[1]

Child Nutrition and Development Program

The *Child Nutrition and Development Program* (CNDP) provides grant funding to over 70 community agencies to develop food security initiatives such as collective kitchens, food box

[1] To find out more about the programs and services of the Ministry, see page 31 for contact information.

programs and school and community nutrition education programs.

CNDP promotes good nutrition practices for children, helps develop independence skills and provides an opportunity for communities to take ownership of local food security initiatives.

Children and Families

The Ministry provides targeted support programs to at-risk children, youth and families. It also supports child welfare services to protect children from abuse and neglect. In addition, regional staff provide case management, supervision, assessment and treatment for children in the Minister's care. The Ministry continues to develop programs, services and resources to support families at-risk and prevent crisis situations that require child welfare interventions. The main program areas include:

Adoption

Adoptions in Saskatchewan are governed by *The Adoption Act*. The Ministry of Social Services offers programs in domestic adoption, assisted adoption, inter-country adoption and post-adoption.

Domestic Adoption

Domestic adoption refers to the adoption of a child who is permanently in the care of the Minister of Social Services. These children may be infants or older children, and include those who may have special needs such as physical health issues or intellectual impairment. Children who are permanently committed to the care of the Minister of Social Services may be adopted if they are legally eligible for adoption and adoption is considered in their best interest. These children are matched with potential adoptive parents who have had a home study report completed. Processing the adoption through court is done by Social Services.

Inter-country Adoption

Residents of Saskatchewan who wish to adopt a child from another country must make an application to Social Services and meet the requirements for inter-country adoption. Individual assessment is made on each application based on the ability of the prospective adoptive parent(s) to successfully parent an adopted child.

Assisted Adoption

The Assisted Adoption Program may provide assistance to adoptive families who are interested in the challenge of parenting children who have special needs and are in the care of the Minister of Social Services prior to adoption.

Post-Adoption Services

The Saskatchewan Post-Adoption Registry was established in 1982. Since then, it has handled hundreds of requests for information or contact from those involved in the adoption process. Services provided free-of-charge through the Post-Adoption Registry include provision of non-identifying information, search and contact, passive registration, specific documents, and special search services.

Child Protection Services

The Ministry of Social Services provides child protection services under the authority of *The Child and Family Services Act*. First Nations Child and Family Services agencies, through delegated authority of the Minister of Social Services, provide similar services to children and families living on-reserve.

The primary purpose of child protection services is to provide services to children, youth and families where a child is in need of protection due to abuse or neglect. The Ministry investigates reports of child abuse or neglect and, if required, takes action to ensure the child's safety.

There is a range of in-home family services to address child safety issues in order to avoid children being placed out of the home. Parents may receive services from Ministry staff, various professionals in the community, as well as community-based organizations. These services include home based support from parent aides or homemakers, life skills training, parenting education and training, child care and counseling.

In situations where child safety in the family home cannot be guaranteed, children are removed from parental care. Child protection services focus on the identified risks to child safety so children can return home as soon as possible. However, in some cases, where there are continued concerns of risks to the child, they remain in care of the Minister and a long-term plan for the child is required.

Out-of-Home Placements

Foster Care

The majority of children in the care of the Ministry are in foster homes. Private families provide foster care to children who cannot live with their own families for a period of time. Before becoming approved to have children placed with them, foster families must pass an orientation and home approval process which includes standardized training. Once approved, foster families must complete additional training related to the special needs of children in care and their families. Foster families come from all walks of life, and a variety of cultural, educational and economic backgrounds. There are about 800 foster homes in the province.

Extended Family Care

Extended Family Care is an option for placing a child in need of protection with relatives or others who have a strong relationship to the child. Placement with extended family maintains a child's connection to their family and community. Extended family caregivers may include persons recognized by the court or mutually agreed to by the Ministry and the family.

Therapeutic Foster Care

Often, children in the care of the Ministry require additional care, treatment or education. Saskatchewan's Therapeutic Foster Care Program is an alternative to staffed residential programs for these children.

Therapeutic foster care combines the positive environment of a nurturing family with treatment that is usually found in more controlled residential settings. Therapeutic foster parents do not need to have a formal education. Therapeutic foster parents provide intensive and consistent guidance to help young people in their care cope with troubling issues, and gain the skills necessary to live in the community more successfully.

Other Placement Options

Not all children in the care of the Ministry can be cared for by foster parents or extended family caregivers. Some children require more structured living arrangements provided through a residential placement.

The Ministry supports several assessment and stabilization centres in the province to provide a short-term response for children or youth unable to remain at home or in a placement due to difficult behaviours.

Adolescent group homes provide care for young people requiring a supportive group-living environment with their peers. Group homes are operated by both community organizations and by the Ministry. These homes provide 24-hour individualized care, safety and supervision for youth typically 12 years of age and older. The objectives for the adolescent group homes depend on who they serve. In some cases, they provide stable and supportive long-term care. In other cases, they work towards reuniting young people with their families, and for older youth, provide the skills and confidence necessary to move toward independent living.

Family Violence and Sexual Assault Services

The Government of Saskatchewan works in partnership with communities, families and individuals to foster family relationships free of violence and abuse. Community groups, organizations and government work at the community and provincial levels to address systemic issues that contribute to family violence.

The Ministry of Social Services funds 10 women's shelters in Saskatchewan providing emergency accommodation and support for women and their children who are leaving abusive and violent circumstances. These shelters are located in Moose Jaw, Swift Current, North Battleford, Lloydminster, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Yorkton and Regina. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) funds shelters in Meadow Lake, Yorkton and Fort Qu'Appelle. A shelter in La Ronge is co-funded by Social Services and INAC.

Sexual assault services provide crisis intervention, support and counseling to victims of sexual assault. These services are delivered by community-based organizations in North Battleford, Lloydminster, Prince Albert, Regina, Yorkton and Saskatoon.

Cognitive Disability Strategy

The Cognitive Disability Strategy is an inter-ministerial initiative that involves the Ministries of Health; Social Services; Office of Disability Issues; Corrections, Public Safety and Policing; Justice and Attorney General; Education; Advanced Education, Employment and Labour; and the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority. Social Services is responsible for the oversight of the direct services

component, which focuses on integrated planning, flexible funding and behavioural consultant support.

Flexible funding is available for exceptional and unique needs of individuals and their families affected by a cognitive disability. A broad range of supports is provided for needs such as respite, mentoring services, therapies, transportation and independent living supports. The age range for services has been mainly between six and 24 years; however, there is some flexibility to consider cases beyond these ages, based on needs.

Community Inclusion

The Community Living Division (CLD) leads the Ministry's activities with respect to programs for persons with intellectual disabilities. CLD consults on service and program matters with individuals and their associations and co-ordinates services with other Ministries and agencies.

Staff of the Community Living Division deliver programs and services primarily through an extensive system of community-based agencies. The Community Living Division funds approximately 100 community-based organizations, which provide services to the public in the following areas: residential services, including group homes and supported independent living; family support services; and developmental and functional life skills services.

Staff of CLD also work in partnership with provincially based representatives and advocacy organizations.

Program Delivery

Program personnel are located in 15 communities: North Battleford, Prince Albert, Melfort, Meadow Lake, Lloydminster, La Ronge, Saskatoon, Rosetown, Yorkton, Regina, Estevan, Weyburn, Swift Current, Moose Jaw and Nipawin. They provide support and program services to individuals, families and community-based organizations. Staff work closely with others in government and the community to develop person-centred plans for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families, consult on specialized programs for families and service providers, and co-ordinate available community resources.

The focus of program delivery is on building and enhancing a comprehensive community-based service continuum that will meet the broad range of disability support needs of clients.

Valley View Centre

Valley View Centre (VVC), located immediately south of Moose Jaw, provides 24-hour, seven-days-a-week residential services for approximately 250 people with intellectual disabilities who have lived at the Centre for an extended period of time. No new admissions have been accepted since October 2002.

North View

The North View Home program, located in Prince Albert, provides 24-hour residential care for five people with intellectual disabilities. The site also provides a crisis support program for people in the community who have intellectual disabilities and complex needs.

Office of Disability Issues

The Office of Disability Issues (ODI) works closely with the Ministry of Social Services in its responsibility for government-wide disability policy co-ordination.

The goal of the ODI is to increase the responsiveness of the mainstream service system to the needs of persons with disabilities and their families, while developing or maintaining specialized services as needed. The ODI does this by working with government ministries and the disability community to identify and resolve issues of concern such as education and training; employment; income support; health and wellness; and inclusion and full citizenship for persons with disabilities.

Housing

The Housing Division has the lead responsibility for policy, programs and services that support housing self-reliance among low and moderate-income households. The Housing Division supplies the staff resources for Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), which manages housing resources of approximately $2.351 billion in public housing assets. The Housing Division, through SHC, has agreements with approximately 450 organizations, including housing authorities, housing co-operatives and non-profit agencies. Over 1,500 volunteers support the effort of housing authorities in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Housing Corporation provides funding for ongoing and new housing programs and services for low to moderate-income households with an identified need. Assistance may be in the form of subsidized rents, forgivable or repayable loans, or a grant. Programs include social and affordable rental housing, home renovations, repairs and energy retrofit programs, home adaptation programs, supports to independent living for seniors, and homeownership options.

Affordable Housing Development

SHC's *HomeFirst Rental Development Program*, *HomeFirst Homeownership Program*, and *HomeFirst Secondary Suites Program* are three of the programs to increase the supply of affordable housing in the province.

The *HomeFirst Rental Program* provides one-time capital funding to assist non-profit corporations, co-operatives, municipalities and the private sector to develop affordable rental units for low to moderate-income households.

The *HomeFirst Homeownership Program* provides forgivable equity loans and low-interest second mortgages to families to help them buy a home, depending upon household income and the price of the home purchased.

The *HomeFirst Secondary Suite Program* provides forgivable loans to individuals, non-profits, Aboriginal organizations and the private sector to develop affordable rental suites in existing and new housing. This program will increase the supply of affordable housing by encouraging people to turn space in their homes into rental suites.

Social and Affordable Rental Programs

Social and affordable rental housing provide low-cost rental housing for eligible individuals and families.

The Social Housing Rental Program provides quality housing that is affordable for low-income seniors, families and people with disabilities. Rent is based on income, with priority given to those with health and/or social needs and families in crisis. The objective of the program is to assist individuals and families in need to obtain affordable, adequate and suitable rental housing accommodation.

The Affordable Housing Rental Program enables moderate-income families and individuals to access suitable rental accommodations. It is a subsidized housing program, with fixed levels of rent kept affordable through operating agreements with private, non-profit, and co-operative organizations that offer rental accommodation. The objective of the program is: to alleviate the shortage of rental accommodation for moderate-income families and individuals in larger market communities where there is a lack of quality, affordable housing; and to create a supply of affordable rental housing in non-market communities where there is limited private market rental accommodation, but there is a need for individuals and families to access rental accommodation.

Repair, Renovation and Adaptation Programs

Funding is available through various programs that offer forgivable loans to low-income homeowners and to rental property owners with low-income tenants to upgrade their properties to minimum health and safety standards. Repairs must correct a major deficiency in at least one of the following housing systems: structural, heating, plumbing, electrical, or fire safety. Eligible repairs are those that bring the dwelling up to a minimum standard of health and safety and extend the useful life of the home by at least 15 years.

Home adaptation programs offer financial assistance to low-income homeowners and tenants to make homes accessible for seniors or people with disabilities to help them live independently. Assistance is also available to low-income homeowners when emergency repairs are needed for continued safe occupancy of their homes.

Repair programming improves the quality of housing and helps to rejuvenate inner cities and strengthen northern communities.

Saskatchewan Home Energy Improvement Program

The Saskatchewan Home Energy Improvement Program (SHEIP) provides financial assistance to low and moderate-income homeowners and rental property owners, to make energy efficiency retrofits that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make housing more affordable. The program is a "top up" to the federal ecoENERGY Retrofit Program and SaskEnergy's Saskatchewan EnerGuide for Houses Program.

Saskatchewan Assisted Living Services

Saskatchewan Assisted Living Services (SALS) provides tenants living in senior social housing access to community-based support services to maintain their independence and quality of life.

Central Support Activities

Central office assists the Ministry's regional staff through provision of supports and services including human resources, budgeting, program design and evaluation, policy analysis and development, legislation and regulation, research and intergovernmental relations. The four major program divisions include: the Income Assistance Division, the Child and Family Services Division, the Housing Division and the Community Living Division.

The Ministry delivers programs that help people become more active in the economic and social life of their communities.

This Annual Report describes the actions and accomplishments of the Ministry of Social Services for the 2007-08 fiscal year. The Ministry uses this information to assess our overall progress and to inform and improve on our future plans and actions.

Unless otherwise indicated, this report presents actual program and financial data and results at year-end for March 31, 2008.

Minister's Mandate Letter

In November 2007, the new Minister of Social Services was given a mandate to accomplish progress over four years in the following areas:

Commitment 1

- Hold a summit of community-based organizations within the first six months of our government to develop a new social policy direction for Saskatchewan.

Commitment 2

- Move towards long-term, stable and predictable funding for community-based organizations, while ensuring greater accountability for the dollars that are spent.

Commitment 3

- Deliver on our commitment to increase funding for transition houses and sexual assault centres to strengthen services to women who are sexually assaulted or the victims of domestic violence.

Commitment 4

- Deliver on our commitment to provide annual funding to support the creation and operation of a provincial umbrella association for sexual assault services.

Commitment 5

- Deliver on our commitment to provide additional funding over the next four years to food banks and community-based organizations that provide life skills, development and employment training to under-skilled individuals.

Commitment 6

- Request that the Provincial Auditor undertake an immediate audit of all service agreements with third-party organizations delivering services to children at-risk.

Commitment 7

- Request that the Children's Advocate investigate and report publicly on the quality of care in facilities that deliver care to children at-risk.

Commitment 8

- Provide the Children's Advocate with the authority to undertake random checks of safe houses and other provincially-funded facilities that provide services to children at-risk.

Commitment 9

- Reconvene the Saskatchewan Legislature's Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children through the Sex Trade, which first provided recommendations to the government in 2002, to determine whether the recommendations have been effectively acted upon and to identify further action that can be taken to prevent the abuse and exploitation of children through the sex trade.

This letter can be found on the Minister's home page: ***http://www.gov.sk.ca/cabinet/harpauer***.

Progress in 2007-08

A New Government Direction – Growth, Security and Promises

This section of the report provides results since the election of the new government in November 2007 related to the strategic priorities as presented in the Minister's mandate letter and other key government commitments.

Commitment 1

Hold a summit of community-based organizations within the first six months of our government to develop a new social policy direction for Saskatchewan.

- **Progress Made:** The government is hosting a province-wide CBO Summit in September 2008. The theme of the meetings is "Putting Clients First – Investing in our Future." The summit is to facilitate a dialogue, to identify challenges, develop solutions, share successful practices and review current policies.

Commitment 2

Move towards long-term, stable and predictable funding for community-based organizations, while ensuring greater accountability for the dollars that are spent.

- **Progress Made:** The Ministry of Social Services administered a survey across human service ministries (Education; Social Services; Advanced Education, Employment and Labour; Corrections, Public Safety and Policing; Health) to identify funding methodologies and reporting requirements for community-based organizations. Information was summarized and a report prepared for the Minister.

Commitment 3

Deliver on our commitment to increase funding for transition houses and sexual assault centres to strengthen services to women who are sexually assaulted or the victims of domestic violence.

- **Progress Made:** The Ministry announced increased funding of $1.1 million for transition houses and sexual assault centres to strengthen services to women who are sexually assaulted or the victims of domestic violence.

Commitment 4

Deliver on our commitment to provide annual funding to support the creation and operation of a provincial umbrella association for sexual assault services.

- **Progress Made:** The Minister has asked Saskatchewan Association of Sexual Assault Services (SASS) and Provincial Association of Transition Houses (PATHS) to provide her with recommendations for the distribution of funds concerning the most appropriate approach to provincial co-ordination.

Commitment 5

Deliver on our commitment to provide additional funding over the next four years to food banks and community-based organizations that provide life skills, development and employment training to under-skilled individuals.

- **Progress Made:** The Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour has assumed responsibility for this commitment. There has been $5 million allocated to increase funding for food banks and community-based organizations. Funding will also support life skills and pre-employment training.

Commitment 6

Request that the Provincial Auditor undertake an immediate audit of all service agreements with third-party organizations delivering services to children at-risk.

- **Progress Made:** Nothing to report at this time.

Commitment 7

Request that the Children's Advocate investigate and report publicly on the quality of care in facilities that deliver care to children at-risk.

- **Progress Made:** The Children's Advocate legislation is being reviewed. Changes to the legislation will consider expanding the authority of the CAO to undertake these investigations.

Commitment 8

Provide the Children's Advocate with the authority to undertake random checks of safe houses and other provincially-funded facilities that provide services to children at-risk.

- **Progress Made:** The Children's Advocate legislation is being reviewed. Considerations on changes to the legislation include expanding the authority of the CAO to undertake the random checks of provincially-funded facilities.

Commitment 9

Reconvene the Saskatchewan Legislature's Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children through the Sex Trade, which first provided recommendations to the government in 2002, to determine whether the recommendations have been effectively acted upon and to identify further action that can be taken to prevent the abuse and exploitation of children through the sex trade.

- **Progress Made:** No progress to report.

Other Key Actions

- The discount bus pass program was renewed in cities across the province. As part of the renewed agreements, the Ministry will now pay $18 toward each monthly bus pass sold to eligible lower-income people (client cost $15 or $20 in Saskatoon). This represents a 50 per cent increase to the provincial subsidy.

- The Ministry announced an investment of $15 million for an electronic case management system to support child welfare work in the province. The system will provide case workers with the most current status of the child's file immediately, which allows for decision-making in the best interest of the child's health, safety and well-being. The system will also improve the collection of province-wide statistics to inform decision-making and improve accountability. It is expected to be fully implemented by 2011.

- The Provincial Task Force on Housing Affordability met with stakeholders in several cities to gather input and provide recommendations to the Provincial Government on policies to encourage greater housing affordability.

- The Housing Task Force Report is expected in June 2008 and the Minister will review the Task Force's recommendations in the coming year.

- The Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre Inc. (EGADZ) received $500,000 from the Ministry to purchase two more group homes for young people. EGADZ is a non-profit, community-based organization that provides services to empower at-risk youth in Saskatoon. The new homes will follow the My Home model under which five young residents get help from staff for day-to-day living and access services in the community such as counseling. Both of the new homes will also provide in-house drug and alcohol addiction services through a partnership with the Saskatoon Health Region.

Progress by Key Business Area

The key actions and performance measures originally published in our 2007-08 Performance Plan are provided below, organized by key program and followed by a report on actual progress for each.

Income Assistance Division

Income Assistance Division provides financial assistance and a range of programs focusing on increasing opportunities for self-sufficiency and employability for individuals and families with an identified need.

Key Commitments

- **Enhance services to link social assistance clients more quickly and effectively to jobs.**

  From March 2007 to March 2008, the total social assistance caseload (SAP and TEA) in the province dropped by 7.3%. The Ministry is establishing new programs to help targeted clients move more quickly from social assistance into the labour market. The Ministry is working with Advanced Education, Employment and Labour to revise its active job search service, *JobsFirst*, and deliver it in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, North Battleford, Yorkton and Moose Jaw. *JobsFirst* participants take part in job search sessions linking individuals with skills to available jobs in their community.

  New Parent Support workshops will be developed starting in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. These workshops will inform parents of programs and services that can help them make the transition to employment.

- **Increase the income threshold of the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES) to account for inflation.**

  The income thresholds increased by $215 per month for the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement, effective May 1, 2007. Further rate increases are scheduled to take effect in 2008-09.

- **Increase access to the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement by 10%.**

  The SES caseload was 5,673 in March 2008, down 15% from March 2007. This is partly due to wage inflation, which causes some households to exceed the threshold for eligibility. In current economic conditions, earnings in many households are increasing rapidly, so that many families are moving off the employment supplement.

- **Increase access to the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement (SRHS) by 10%.**

  The SRHS caseload in March 2008 was down 5% from March 2007. The Disability portion of the supplement increased 24% over the year; however, the number of families receiving the Family Housing Supplement decreased by 14%.

- **Improve the income adequacy of people receiving SAP and TEA. Increase the SAP basic allowance and the TEA general living allowance by $10/month. Increase the personal living allowance for people living in residential care homes by $5/month.**

  SAP and TEA adult allowances increased by $10 per month, and the personal living allowance increased by $5 per month, effective May 1, 2007.

- **Technical improvements in Income Assistance to better meet the new client service targets.**

  Work is underway to:

  - Replace the telephone recording system at the Contact Centre because the technology is out-of-date;
  - The Division is moving forward with an information technology system replacement project for delivery of income support programs;
  - Introduce imaging technology for TEA-related documents to improve paper handling and archiving.

- **Develop and implement a client focused training strategy for front-line staff that enhances awareness and knowledge of individual disabilities, characteristics and circumstances.**

  Client focused training, including the impact of specific disabilities (and how to best plan with those clients), has been delivered to staff in all regions (67 staff took client focused training

and 81 took disability specific training). This has included training for Contact Centre staff on Acquired Brain Injury, and participation in conferences on Autism and Asperger's Disorder, and Acquired Brain Injury.

- **Strengthen processes to ensure that client benefit payments are made accurately and only to eligible persons.**

  The Ministry is undertaking a risk assessment to identify potential areas of risk and to focus effort on controls and processes to reduce risk. Work will commence early in 2008-09. An inter-jurisdictional survey of risk assessment processes has been completed.

  The Ministry also has a comprehensive Quality Improvement Plan with numerous action items directed to improving and strengthening payment processes.

Measurement Results

The number of families receiving the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES).

The Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES) was introduced in 1998 to help low-income parents with child-related costs of working. The performance measure may be influenced by several factors, including the health of the labour market at the lower end of the income scale, and the visibility and accessibility of the program to low-income families and their employers.

The measure is based on the monthly average number of families receiving SES payments during the fiscal year.

Year	Monthly average number of families receiving SES
2004-05	7,710
2005-06	7,679
2006-07	6,852
2007-08	6,043

Source: SS Report MRPW01

Measurement Results

The number of households receiving the Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP) or the Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA).

The number of SAP and TEA beneficiaries.

The Saskatchewan Assistance Program and the Transitional Employment Allowance are last resort income supports for people who have no other alternatives. A reduction in the number of households and persons dependent on these programs is an indication of fewer people requiring assistance, and is generally taken to be an indicator of better outcomes for low-income people in Saskatchewan.

The measure is calculated as a monthly average over a period of 12 months. Over the past year, both the number of households and the number of beneficiaries has declined.

Year	Households on SAP/TEA (cases)	Monthly SAP/TEA beneficiaries
2006-07	27,079	46,346
2007-08	25,963	43,759

Source: SS, Income Assistance Report ER02

Measurement Results

Social assistance beneficiaries as a percentage of the provincial population.

Social assistance is affected by many external trends, such as the unemployment rate, economy and population growth. If reliance on social assistance is declining, it suggests improved participation in employment among social assistance households. This measure is the social assistance dependency rate.

The measure is calculated as the monthly average number of provincial social assistance beneficiaries as a percentage of the total provincial population aged zero to 64 years. Over the past year, the percentage of the population under 65 and in receipt of social assistance has declined.

Year	Households on SAP/TEA (cases)	Monthly SAP/TEA beneficiaries	Sask population aged 0-64[2] (see note 2)	Beneficiaries as % of Sask population aged 0-64
2006-07	27,079	46,346	811,514	5.7%
2007-08	25,963	43,759	822,731	5.3%

Sources: SS, Income Assistance Reports ER02 and Saskatchewan Health Covered Population by residence type, sex, and age group.

Measurement Results

The proportion of new households (SAP and TEA) who leave the program in six months or less.

Income assistance is most often a bridge for people between employment. The rate at which people are able to exit welfare is a measure of how well they are able to find and take up opportunities for employment. This measure is a function of both the services provided by the Ministry and the job opportunities available to people. Ministry staff play an important role by connecting individuals with support programs and community services. The rate of exit is affected by the strength of the labour market and the demand for workers.

The measure is based on the portion of households who enrolled in SAP or TEA and did not receive assistance six months later.

Year	Portion of New SAP/TEA Households leaving in six months or less
2006-07	53% (entrants from April 1/06 to March 31/07)
2007-08	53% (entrants from April 1/07 to March 31/08)

Source: SS SWIN payment data.

Measurement Results

The number of families receiving the Child Care Subsidy.

Child care is a necessary expense for working families with young children. The *Child Care Subsidy* covers a portion of the parents' costs of care. The subsidy is scaled to income so that lower income families have a higher proportion of their fees covered through the program. Increases in the number of families using subsidies indicate those working families who are financially better off through having a portion of their child care covered by the subsidy.

This measure is based on the average number of subsidies provided each month.

Year	Number of Child Care Subsidies
2006-07	3,362
2007-08	3,412

Source: SS Report BR65

Measurement Results

The number of families or individuals receiving the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement.

For low-income families, housing costs often consume a high percentage of their family income. The Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement (SRHS) was designed to ameliorate the effect of rental costs for those families whose costs are high relative to their income. Increases in the take up of this supplement signify those families who are better able to meet their financial needs through

[2] The method and source for measuring population has changed to include only the off-reserve population, based on Saskatchewan Health Covered Population. For the 2006-07 Annual Report, the source for population data was the Statistics Canada annual estimate, which does not distinguish between people living on and off-reserve. The 2006-07 numbers have been revised to reflect the new method.

the housing supplement. The supplement has two components: a Family Housing Supplement for low-income families with children, and a Disability Housing Supplement for individuals or families where at least one person in the household has a disability that affects their housing requirements.

The measure reports on the average monthly number of households that receive either of the two rental housing supplements.

Year	Number of households receiving the SRHS
2006-07	3,236
2007-08	3,048

Source: SS SWIN payment data

Measurement Results

The percentage of Market Basket Measure (MBM) that is met by federal and provincial income support programs.

When living costs rise without an associated adjustment to financial assistance benefits, individuals and families become relatively worse off. Their decreased purchasing power puts them at a further disadvantage and hinders prospects for greater independence and well-being. This performance measure shows the relationship of financial assistance benefits available to different groups of low-income households to a standardized measure of low income.

The low-income measure used here is the Market Basket Measure, calculated by Statistics Canada.[3] The MBM establishes the cost of a basket of goods and services that includes a nutritious diet, clothing and footwear, shelter, transportation, personal care items, household supplies and other necessary goods and services. It attempts to measure a standard of living above subsistence and approaching social inclusion.

This performance measure permits analysis of the extent to which government benefits change with respect to established social minimums utilizing the Market Basket Measure. The Market Basket Measure is the preferred indicator of low income because it reflects actual costs and geographic variations.

MBM data was last published in 2006 for the year 2002. For this measure, the MBM has been estimated for subsequent years by adjusting the 2002 figures using the Consumer Price Index for Saskatchewan. The MBM varies by location and family size. In this performance measure, different family types are used to compare their benefits relative to the cost of goods and services in the Regina census metropolitan area.

Social assistance benefits are calculated based on available income from SAP/TEA, using shelter maximums, plus all federal and provincial transfers (i.e. child benefits, estimated GST and PST rebates) and income available from Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement. The calculation does not include special needs, earnings exemptions or the additional resources available through Saskatchewan Employment Supplement. Utility costs for SAP and TEA are based on average actual payments. TEA rates are used here for both singles and single parents, while SAP rates are used for singles with disabilities.

Omitted from the calculation are benefits from other programs, such as supplementary health benefits.

[3] A full description of the Market Basket Measure may be obtained from Statistics Canada at http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/75F0002MIE/75F0002MIE2004001.pdf

Per cent of MBM that is met by provincial and federal transfers for different household types			
Year	Single, fully employable (TEA)	Single with disability (SAP)	Single parent with two children (TEA)
2006-07	58%	87%	97%
2007-08	61%	91%	99%

Source: Estimated federal and provincial transfers compared to the 2002 MBM for Regina census metropolitan area indexed to recent years using the all items CPI.

The population at VVC was 254 as of March 31, 2008. There were 10 discharges and 15 deaths over the 2007-08 fiscal year.

As the population of VVC declines through attrition and the movement of individuals to community homes (formerly referred to as "cottages") over the next few months, the average population of six of the homes at the Centre will be reduced to 25.

Community Living Division

Community Living Division provides and facilitates community-based supports that assist people with intellectual disabilities to live as independently as possible within their communities.

- **Full implementation of the redesigned respite benefit for families with children with intellectual disabilities.**

  The new respite program was fully implemented in March 2007 with 428 families receiving a respite benefit payment. This number has steadily increased, with 598 families receiving a respite benefit payment at March 31, 2008.

- **Evaluate impact of the new respite program.**

  A three-year evaluation has been initiated. The baseline survey of the former respite program is complete and plans are underway to continue the formative evaluation of the new program. The intent of the formative evaluation is to provide information on the program implementation including the program rationale, delivery, profiles of applicants and caregivers, service use and quality, assessment instruments, and the immediate or short-term impact on families and CLD.

  A second survey of families has been completed as part of the formative evaluation.

- **Develop strategy to reduce the average home population at Valley View Centre (VVC) from 28 to 25 to accommodate space requirements for an aging population.**

- **Develop a strategy to address declining professional staff (nurse) numbers ensuring provision of quality professional coverage at Valley View Centre.**

  There is a disparity in compensation for nurses and other professional staff (i.e. licensed or registered) within Community Living Division, as compared with other health sectors. As a result, recruitment and retention of nurses and other related staff has become a challenge. A market wage supplement for these positions was provided effective October 1, 2007.

  A market supplement for Laboratory Technicians at Valley View Centre was approved at the end of March 2008 to be effective in October 2008.

- **Expansion of crisis support services through the redesign of North View Home in Prince Albert and implementation of a crisis support program in Regina.**

  The North View Crisis Support Program is near full operation. Three crisis support therapists have been hired. The crisis residence supported two individuals in 2007-08.

  The new Regina Crisis Support Program began operating through a community-based organization in 2007-08. To date it has supported one individual.

- **Increase opportunities and supports for people with an intellectual disability by developing new or enhancing residential and day programs across the province.**

Funding allocations for new initiatives was approved by December 31, 2007. A net total of four new day program spaces were created, as well as 24 new group home spaces and seven group living spaces. Resources were also provided to increase the capacity of a number of programs to respond to the increasing needs of current participants.

- **Implement new vocational program funding standard and phase in new standards as resources are allocated.**

  The Ministry has been working with activity centres and vocational programs to develop new standards and associated funding for these day programs. The intent is to increase accountability and to link funding levels to the impact of disability and the assessed needs of the individual. New funding standards will be piloted before province-wide implementation occurs. Assessments have been completed in five pilot sites.

Measurement Results

The number of admissions to Valley View Centre.

A decision in October of 2002 to end admissions to VVC reflects the Ministry's vision of community inclusion for individuals with intellectual disabilities. At that time, the population of VVC was 365 individuals.

During the last three fiscal years, no one has been admitted to VVC, and the population has declined from 296 in 2005-06 to 254 at March 31, 2008.

Measurement Results

The number of persons with intellectual disabilities moving from Valley View Centre to community residential alternatives.

Movement of individuals living at VVC to the community may be seen as a measure of effectiveness of efforts to develop family and community supports that support community inclusion. Many individuals with similar needs to those currently residing at VVC, in addition to individuals who have relocated from VVC, are well-supported in community-based options. Some individuals, or their family members on their behalf, have indicated a preference to continue living at VVC.

Year end	Number of people moving from Valley View into the community
March 31, 2006	6 people
March 31, 2007	7 people
March 31, 2008	10 people

Source: Community Living Division Reports

Measurement Results

The number of persons with intellectual disabilities living in own residences with minimal life skills support through Community Living funded supportive living programs.

Independence and choice are considered important aspects of quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities. This measure indicates success at developing supports that provide people with intellectual disabilities opportunities to live independently in their communities. Though the number of people living independently has remained relatively steady, the hours of service required to support them has increased. This finding likely reflects a shift in the needs of people living on their own, with a greater number of people with more challenging disabilities requiring support.

This measure is the year-end total number of people living in their own residence and supported through Community Living Division supportive living programs.

Year end	Number of people with intellectual disabilities living in their own residences through CLD supportive living programs
March 31, 2006	450 people
March 31, 2007	446 people
March 31, 2008	447 people

Source: Community Living Division Reports

Measurement Results

The number of children with disabilities for whom families receive a respite benefit.

Respite permits families who have children with intellectual disabilities to obtain temporary assistance in caring for their child. The program enables the parent to spend additional time with other family members, and to engage in other family and household activities that are normally not possible due to the intensive care required by the child with the disability. Respite provides that extra support that allows children to remain at home and be cared for by family members.

Year end	Number of children with disabilities for whom families receive a respite benefit
March 31, 2007	429
March 31, 2008	598

Source: Community Living Division Reports

Child and Family Services Division

Child and Family Services develops policy and provides services and funding to protect children from abuse and neglect, support families and communities in caring for children, assists people facing family violence, and provides adoption services and services for at-risk youth.

- **Where appropriate, divert vulnerable families from child protection intervention to targeted community-based programs.**

Every regional office contracts for services provided through community agencies in their region. These organizations provide some of these services to families who may not meet the mandate of child protection services but require some intervention and support in order that they do not enter the child protection system.

- **Support the care of children at-risk by placing them with extended family or other persons of sufficient interest, as a priority for out-of-home care.**

During 2007-08, there were approximately 1,502 children in need of protection being supported by the Ministry to live with extended family. This represents 44% of the total number of children in care, up 2% from 2006-07.

- **Ensure a protective response to sexually exploited children and youth by expanding the service continuum including new assessment, stabilization and transition services.**

The Ministry continues to serve this population of youth through the existing continuum of out-of-home care resources. Development of additional family-based and staffed resources continues to be a priority for the Ministry and the regional offices.

- **Expand, support and improve the quality and range of resources that meet the developmental and special needs of children in the Minister's care including residential services on-reserve. Ensure this continuum reduces the need for high cost resources.**

The Ministry received a mid-year investment which will total $18 million annually for child welfare services. The new funds are to hire 30 additional caseworkers and 30 new workers to focus on permanency planning; to increase foster care rates and alternate care and Person of Sufficient Interest (PSI) rates; and to develop additional residential spaces for children requiring out-of-home care.

- **Develop new foster homes through a recruitment campaign.**

  As of March 31, 2008 there were 784 provincially approved foster families.

  Since March 2007, there have been approximately 150 new foster families recruited; however, because some foster families retire, move or discontinue fostering, the net increase is approximately 30 families (or 4%).

  The Ministry is exploring alternative options for recruitment and retention of foster families.

- **Recruit an additional 20 workers to meet increased pressures in foster care, therapeutic foster care private treatment and family supports.**

  Twenty new Child and Family Service workers across the province have been hired to address pressures on the child welfare system, due to the increased number of children in care.

- **Continue partnerships with First Nations Child and Family Service agencies to support children in care to reconnect to their First Nations' communities.**

  The Ministry continues to transfer off-reserve First Nations cases to the First Nations Child and Family Service agencies as placement resources, including extended family, are located on-reserve. The Ministry continues to provide financial compensation for case management services.

  A review of the information sharing and case transfer process is in the planning stages.

  The Ministry is actively involved in the ongoing development of the First Nations Institute. The Institute has been officially incorporated with staffing and staff development now underway.

- **Strengthen the relationship with the First Nations Child and Family Service agencies by assessing and building their capacity around finance, human resources, accountability, quality management and service delivery.**

  The Ministry has hired new staff to monitor FNCFS agency agreements and provide support to the agencies. In addition, the March 2008 budget provided a 2.3% increase to the case management fees, to reimburse agencies for the case management work required when children or youth who live off-reserve are placed in out-of-home placements on-reserve.

- **Respond to the independent reviews of the Children's Advocate and Provincial Auditor related to the Oyate Safe House and services for sexually exploited children and to recommendations related to critical case incidents.**

  The Ministry of Social Services will not be signing a contract for services with Oyate for 2008-09. The safe house has not been operational for close to two years and administrative and management issues have not been satisfactorily resolved.

Measurement Results

The number of child protection families served by the Ministry.

When a child is at risk of abuse or neglect, the Ministry is required to conduct an investigation into the circumstances and conditions surrounding the child and his/her family. Depending on the circumstances, Ministry staff may seek to help the parents safely care for their children by referring parents or children to appropriate agencies, or supporting the family through in-home parent aide services. A measure on child protection families can inform the Ministry of supports that are required to protect and support the growth and development of children, youth and families. Although this is in some ways a "negative" measure, in that it counts instances where parents may lack the capacity to adequately protect their children, it nonetheless reflects changes in the number of children who are at-risk.

Increases in this measure would suggest that more families are struggling to properly care and provide for the safety of their children. This may be due to overall societal changes, or breakdowns in community and other supports for families.

Year end	Number of child protection families served by the Ministry
March 31, 2003	2,088 families
March 31, 2004	1,860 families
March 31, 2005	1,951 families
March 31, 2006	2,172 families
March 31, 2007	1,935 families
March 31, 2008	1,954 families

Source: Automated Client Index: Month End Caseload Reports

Measurement Results

The percentage of out-of-home placements that are extended family placements.

Foster care has been the traditional placement resource for a child requiring out-of-home care. This measure indicates the Ministry's success at extended family placements that maintain a closer link between the child and family.

This measure is calculated as the number of extended family placements over the total number of out-of-home placements (e.g. group homes, private treatment homes, foster homes) for children at March 31 of each fiscal year.

Year end	Percentage of out-of-home placements with extended family
March 31, 2005	20.1%
March 31, 2006	22.5%
March 31, 2007	24.4%
March 31, 2008	24.8%

Source: Automated Client Index: Month End Caseload Reports

Performance Measures

The number of children in care of the Minister.

Children may be placed in care of the Minister on a temporary or permanent basis if their parents are unable to care for them safely. Children who grow up in care of the Minister frequently experience poorer life outcomes than children raised in their own families. It is appropriate to ensure that children are taken into care only when necessary.

In Saskatchewan, approximately 80% of children coming into care are of Aboriginal background. Some of these children are served by Ministry staff and resources, and others by staff from the First Nations Child and Family Service agencies. The number of children in care reported in this performance measure includes children on-reserve who are brought into care under First Nations Child and Family Service agencies.

Year end	Number of children in care of the Ministry
March 31, 2003	2,947 children
March 31, 2004	2,798 children
March 31, 2005	2,907 children
March 31, 2006	3,053 children
March 31, 2007	3,243 children
March 31, 2008	3,336 children

Source: Automated Client Index: Month End Caseload Reports

The number of children in care is affected by external demographic factors as well as social conditions and the incidence of problems such as addictions and mental health within families.

Housing Division

While recognizing that the market place is the primary vehicle that provides housing, the Housing Division, through Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), promotes independence and self-sufficiency by providing housing and housing services to those who could not otherwise afford adequate, safe, and secure shelter. SHC provides a continuum of housing programs and services, including social and affordable rental portfolios, home renovation, repair and energy retrofit programs, home adaptations programs, supports to independent living for seniors, and homeownership options.

- **Increase the supply of quality affordable housing available for low to moderate-income families, persons with a disability, seniors and other vulnerable households.**

  The Ministry has a goal of creating 2,000 new affordable housing units by March 31, 2009. As of March 31, 2008, there have been 1,667 units committed towards this goal.

  Funding provided by the federal government from the Affordable Housing Trust and the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust is helping to address shortages in affordable housing in Saskatchewan. Up to 300 affordable units will be created through the Housing Trusts by 2009. As of March 31, 2008, there have been 167 units committed under the Housing Trust.

  Housing initiatives targeted to northern communities and the inner city neighbourhoods of Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and North Battleford will create new affordable rental and homeownership units for low to moderate-income families and youth at-risk. The goal is 500 affordable rental and homeownership units by 2009. As of March 31, 2008, there have been eight homeowner and 137 rental units committed for a total of 145 units.

- **Rehabilitate existing affordable housing stock for low-income households.**

  The commitment to provide repair and renovation funding to 3,000 existing housing units in Saskatchewan between 2004 and 2008 has been exceeded. As of March 31, 2008, commitments through various repair and home modification programs will assist 3,619 households to improve the quality and accessibility of their homes.

  Funding from the Affordable Housing Trust and the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust is helping to address challenges in sustaining the non-profit and co-operative housing portfolio in Saskatchewan, due to rising operating costs and changing client needs. Approximately 700 housing units, managed by non-profit and co-operative groups, will be upgraded through major capital improvements. Delivery of the Métis Housing Trust began in December of 2007. Allocation decisions under the Affordable Housing Trust are nearing completion and delivery is expected to begin in spring 2008.

- **Improve the energy efficiency of homes occupied by low to moderate-income households.**

  The Saskatchewan Home Energy Improvement Program (SHEIP) helps low to moderate-income homeowners and rental property owners housing low-income tenants to undertake energy retrofits. Housing is more affordable by off-setting increased energy costs, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. The program expects to assist 8,000 low and moderate-income homeowners by 2011, and as of March 31, 2008, and since the program's inception, there have been 5,178 commitments made though SHEIP. After one year, each SHEIP client on average reduced natural gas consumption by 26% and reduced CO_2 emissions by 1.6 tonnes per household, due to completed energy efficient upgrades (based on the natural gas consumption of an average Saskatchewan household).

  2007-08 marks the final year of SHC's Energy Conservation Opportunities Plan (ECOplan), a five-year initiative to reduce energy consumption by 10% within SHC-owned social and affordable housing for seniors. The portfolio consists of approximately 11,000 multi-residential, single and semi-detached housing units. The original target has been exceeded, resulting in over $1.2 million in annual savings in energy costs and a reduction of 24,000 tonnes CO_2. SHC plans to continue to invest in ECOplan to further reduce energy use within its portfolio.

  In addition to ECOplan, SHC has a policy to use energy efficient gas furnaces that are EnergyStar rated for all new construction and when replacing existing furnaces. In 2007, SHC expanded this policy to include the purchase of EnergyStar appliances including refrigerators,

cooking ranges and clothes washers. SHC recognizes the benefits of sound environmental management to promote affordable and environmentally sustainable housing for Saskatchewan residents and will continue to review energy efficiency technologies and implement new standards, as these technologies become more practical and affordable.

- **Create homeownership opportunities for low-to-moderate income households with dependents and youth at-risk to improve stability and independence.**

  The HomeFirst Homeowner Program replaced the Centenary Affordable Housing Program (CAHP) in the fall of 2007. Depending upon the household income and price of the home that is purchased, families may be eligible to receive a forgivable loan and a deferred, repayable, low-interest mortgage. Up to 500 homeownership opportunities will be made available through the HomeFirst Homeowner Program over five years. The introduction of this revised homeownership program has significantly advanced the delivery of this initiative. As of March 31, 2008, there have been 244 commitments made towards the 500 goal.

  In addition to delivery through the new HomeFirst Homeowner Program, more than 400 homeownership commitments were made through other programs since 2004.

- **Provide rent subsidies for 300 very low-income families and youth at-risk.**

  Ten million dollars was allocated for ongoing rent supplements over 10 years, which is expected to help 300 very low-income families, youth and young adults at-risk. The subsidies will be delivered through SHC's existing Rent Supplement Program which supplements tenant rents based on their income through contractual arrangements between SHC and rental property owners. Delivery began in December 2007 with two projects receiving supplements for 45 units. The 10-year estimate for providing the monthly subsidy to these two projects is $1.1 million. As of March 31, 2008, the funding disbursed was $30,200.

- **Increase participation of inner city and northern youth in housing and repair projects through expansion of training in the trades.**

  SHC has allocated $500,000 to support a training component aimed at increasing the participation of inner city and northern young adults in housing construction and repair projects. This initiative will improve the housing conditions in Saskatchewan's inner cities and the North through repair and construction, and aid young adults who live in these neighbourhoods with training and work experience.

  SHC will work with partners who will co-ordinate and create the connections between participating contractors and targeted employees. SHC's rental development projects will be used as sites for on the job training. Other regular job sites may include the maintenance programs in place at the housing authorities, SHC's Small Mould Remediation Program and other job placements that meet training needs identified by partners.

  SHC has been working with officials of the Saskatoon and Region Homebuilders Association (SRHA) regarding the Bridges and Foundations for Aboriginal Development project. The Saskatoon Region Homebuilders have submitted an application for funding to the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP). Discussions have also occurred with the Saskatoon and Regina Chapters of Habitat for Humanity regarding a proposal for funding. Start-up of this initiative is expected to take place during the 2008 construction period.

- **Dispose of non-productive public housing units to free resources for deeper needs households.**

  To ensure effective and efficient operations in government-assisted housing, SHC has made available for sale on the private market selected underutilized units from the assisted rental housing portfolio. Freeing up resources allows reallocation of ongoing operating subsidies to areas of existing emerging housing need while simultaneously creating numerous opportunities for affordable homeownership, investment in local private sector rental markets, and other community uses.

As of March 31, 2008, 461 underutilized units have been put to better use. Access to SHC's subsidized rental programs is being maintained by ensuring sufficient stock is retained to meet current and future community needs. As housing demand changes across the province, SHC will continue to ensure long-term sustainability of the assisted rental portfolio.

Measurement Results

The number of affordable housing units developed under the Centenary Affordable Housing Program (CAHP) and other housing programs.

SHC funds the construction of rental and homeowner units and the acquisition and/or renovation of existing buildings for affordable housing. One of the major programs used for these purposes in the past was the Centenary Affordable Housing Program. The HomeFirst Rental Program, the HomeFirst Homeownership Program and the HomeFirst Secondary Suite Program are three new programs recently introduced to increase the supply of affordable housing in the province.

Stable and affordable housing can enable people to participate in the labour force by increasing their financial savings and security of tenure. Stable housing may also provide contacts and networks of support within a community. It also facilitates skills training and education through the availability of increased financial resources and a safe and secure environment where parents can focus on learning.

This measure is the number of housing units that were approved during 2007-08 for a variety of programs.

Year end	Total Cumulative Housing Units Committed	Housing Units Committed in the Current Year
March 31, 2006	1,205 units	Baseline year
March 31, 2007	1,880 units	675 units
March 31, 2008	2,457 units	577 units

Source: Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, Housing Policy and Program Services Status Report

Of the 2,457 housing units committed, 357 are under development, 603 are under construction, and 1,491 units (61%) are complete.

Measurement Results

The number of households assisted through repair, renovation, and adaptation programs.

The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation has several types of repair programs aimed at low-income homeowners, landlords, seniors and persons with disabilities. Repair programming is an important part of the provincial housing strategy to improve the quality of housing in the province. Some repair programs are cost-shared with the federal government, while others are fully funded by the province. Besides repairing accommodations, the programs can be used to make homes accessible for disabled or older residents, enabling them to live independently within their neighbourhood. Better quality housing promotes residential stability, decreases transience, and leads to more stable and cohesive communities.

The measure reports the total number of grant applications that were approved during the fiscal year.

Year end	Cumulative number of energy efficient upgrades and repair grants committed (since 2004)	Number of households assisted in the current year through all repair programs	Number of households assisted in the current year through Saskatchewan Home Energy Improvement Program (SHEIP)
March 31, 2006	1,702 commitments	Baseline year	Program begins
March 31, 2007	5,726 commitments	1,165 commitments	2,859 commitments
March 31, 2008	8,797 commitments	752 commitments	2,319 commitments

Source: Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, Housing Policy Development, Repair Program Reports

Measurement Results

The percentage of homes that upgraded to safety standards after initially failing the housing inspection for the SHRS.

Some low-income families are unable to initially benefit from the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement, if the condition of their residence does not meet a minimal health and safety test. The Ministry provides financial assistance to rental property owners for minor repairs that will bring their properties to a standard that would enable the tenants to qualify for assistance through the SRHS. These repairs are intended to address immediate health and safety issues.

The Ministry of Social Services has partnered with the City of Saskatoon, the City of Regina and a local contractor in Prince Albert to complete health and safety inspections on behalf of the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement. Approximately 200 cases are randomly selected each month.

The measure tracks the number of homes that are safer and more affordable for low-income tenants, as a result of qualifying for the SRHS. A high percentage indicates that landlords are making improvements to their properties. This measure is based on the sample of homes inspected by municipal and provincial housing inspectors.

The measure is the percentage of homes that upgraded to safety standards, after initially failing the SRHS housing inspection.

Year end	Initial Inspection Results		Percentage of homes that upgraded to safety standards
	Passed Inspection	Failed/Declined Inspection	
March 31, 2006	67%	33%	40%
March 31, 2007	60%	40%	83%
March 31, 2008	60%	40%	85%

Source: SS SWIN payment data

Other Commitments

- **Full implementation of third-party phase of CBO investment plan to enhance wages of staff and alleviate pressures on operating costs.**

  On April 1, 2007, all CBOs received 3% and the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC) CBOs received 6%. These enhancements have had an impact on salary increases and salary related benefits.

2007-08 Financial Overview

The Ministry collects revenue relating to fees for management and collection services, cost sharing programs with the Federal Government, and repayments of public assistance. All revenue collected is deposited to the General Revenue Fund.

A summary of the Ministry's 2007-08 budgeted revenue compared to actual revenue is presented below.

Variance explanations are provided for all variances that are greater than 10% of the budget and $0.5M.

2007-2008 Revenues ($000s)

	2007-08 Budget	2007-08 Actual	Variance Over/Under	Notes
Sales, Services and Service Fees				
Management and Collection Services	6,800	6,624	(176)	
Miscellaneous Medical and Institutional Services	673	616	(57)	
Other Miscellaneous Services	8	7	(1)	
Miscellaneous Deductions from Staff Salaries	53	47	(6)	
Subtotal	**7,534**	**7,294**	**(240)**	
Transfers from the Federal Government				
Official Languages	--	--	--	
Young Offenders Agreement	730	1,178	448	
Special Allowance for Children in Care	6,000	7,971	1,971	(1)
Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	1,100	1,622	522	(2)
Subtotal	**7,830**	**10,771**	**2,941**	
Proceeds from Other Funds				
Interest Earnings Saskatchewan Housing Corporation	1,900	--	(1,900)	(3)
Subtotal	**1,900**	**--**	**(1,900)**	
Other Revenue				
Maintenance Order Revenues	625	545	(80)	
Casual Revenue	45	3	(42)	
Repayment – Public Assistance	3,000	1,484	(1,516)	(4)
Refunds of Previous Years' Expenditures	650	636	(14)	
Collection Agency Fees Withheld	--	(34)	(34)	
Subtotal	**4,320**	**2,634**	**(1,686)**	
Total Revenues	**21,584**	**20,699**	**(885)**	

(See following page for notes.)

Explanation of Significant Revenue Variances

1. The Ministry receives federal benefits related to children in the care of the Minister, and therefore, since the number of children in care increased along with an increase to the rates, so does this revenue.

2. This increase is mainly due to the reimbursement by the Federal Government for the costs incurred by this Ministry for emergency evacuation of First Nations people.

3. The $1.9 million budgeted under proceeds from other funds should have been included with the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) Management Fee. The management fee collected from SHC is directly related to the administrative expenditures incurred for SHC. The anticipated expenditures for Housing Trusts and Neighbourhood Revitalization Initiatives were delayed and, therefore, the management fee collected is also delayed.

4. In the past, monies collected on inactive Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP) accounts were recorded as revenue. The Provincial Auditor raised the point that some of these funds should instead be credited against the receivable balance. After the 2007-08 budget was submitted, Social Services concluded that the auditor was correct. In 2007-08, for the first time, the Ministry credited $1.6 million against the receivable balance, which was budgeted as revenue and in previous years recorded as revenue.

The following table outlines actual and budgeted expenditures by subvote and subprogram. Variance explanations are provided for all variances that are greater than 10% of the program budget and $0.5 million.

2007-2008 Expenditures (000s)

Subvote/Allocation	2007-08 Budget	2007-08 Restated Budget	2007-08 Actual	Variance Over/ Under	Notes
Central Management and Services (CR01)					
Executive Management	1,405	1,405	1,520	115	
Central Services	15,254	13,732	15,137	(117)	
Accommodation Services	18,923	17,927	17,469	(1,454)	
Subvote Total	**35,582**	**33,064**	**34,126**	**(1,456)**	
Employment Support and Income Assistance (CR03)					
Saskatchewan Assistance Program	205,664	205,664	210,352	4,688	(1)(7)
Transitional Employment Allowance	46,570	46,570	28,974	(17,596)	(1)(7)
Saskatchewan Income Plan - Senior Citizens' Benefits	8,700	8,700	8,121	(579)	
Shelter Supplements	6,000	6,000	5,605	(395)	
Saskatchewan Child Benefit	750	750	1,038	288	
Saskatchewan Employment Supplement	19,622	19,622	17,416	(2,206)	(2)
Income Security Administration	2,948	2,948	2,747	(201)	
Client and Community Support	4,423	4,423	4,176	(247)	
Child Care Parent Subsidies	16,000	16,000	15,986	(14)	
Subvote Total	**310,677**	**310,677**	**294,415**	**(16,262)**	
Child and Family Services (CR04)					
Child and Family Community Services	62,089	62,089	65,150	3,061	(4)
Child and Family CBO Services	21,600	21,600	24,580	2,980	(3)(4)
Child and Family Services Administration	4,555	4,555	4,053	(502)	(5)
Subvote Total	**88,244**	**88,244**	**93,783**	**5,539**	
Supporting Families and Building Economic Independence (CR05)					
Program Delivery	59,636	58,592	59,859	223	
Income Support - Call Centre	4,737	4,737	4,803	66	
Subvote Total	**64,373**	**63,329**	**64,662**	**289**	
Community Inclusion (CR06)					
Supports for Cognitive Disabilities	2,060	2,060	2,476	416	
Community Living - Program Delivery	26,555	26,073	26,406	(149)	
Payments for Community Living	70,865	70,865	70,766	(99)	
Subvote Total	**99,480**	**98,998**	**99,648**	**168**	
Office of Disability Issues (CR09)	**246**	**246**	**225**	**(21)**	
Housing (CR12)					
Housing Operations	11,332	11,882	10,187	(1,145)	(5)
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation	15,480	15,480	17,135	1,655	(6)
Subvote Total	**26,812**	**27,362**	**27,322**	**510**	
Total Expenditures	**625,414**	**621,920**	**614,181**	**(11,233)**	
Less Capital Asset Acquisitions	(1,900)	(1,900)	(766)	1,134	
Add Amortization	1,695	1,695	1,617	(78)	(8)
Total Expenses	**625,209**	**621,715**	**615,032**	**(10,177)**	

(See following page for notes.)

Explanation of Significant Expenditure Variances

1. Includes the $2 million impact from the approved shelter rate increase in October 2007.

2. Saskatchewan Employment Supplement cases continue a downward trend due to reduced promotion for the program and increased controls.

3. Includes the incremental operating costs for Four Directions Group Home of $449,500.

4. This increase is primarily due to the approved increases in July 2007 related to increasing the number of spaces for out-of-home care, and increased costs related to extended family caregivers and foster care.

5. New positions added in the 2007-08 budget will not be in place as quickly as anticipated.

6. Flexibility in 2007-08 has provided the Ministry an opportunity to pay Saskatchewan Housing Corporation funds committed to the Saskatchewan Home Energy Improvement Program that were previously budgeted in 2008-09.

7. A shift from Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) to Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP) is still occurring. However, a net reduction in the combined SAP/TEA caseload was experienced due to declining cases in TEA. This is attributable to the strong labour market resulting in employable clients moving to employment quicker than expected.

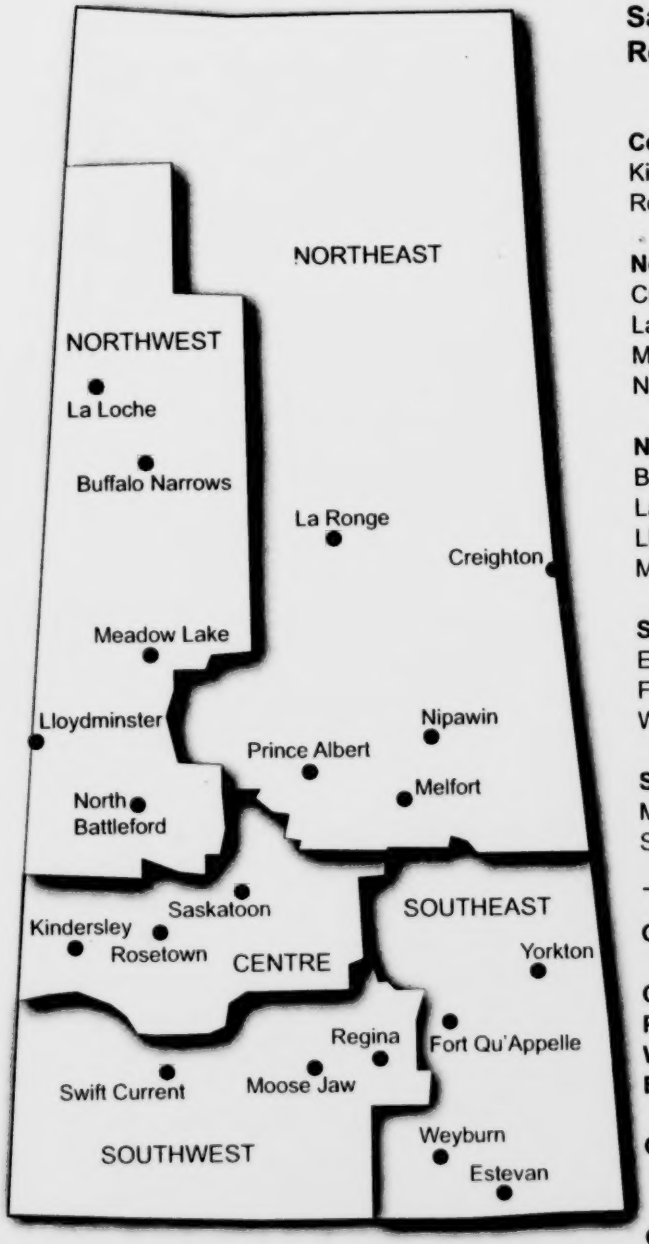
8. Amortization for the current year is based on capital spending in previous years and current year capital acquisitions where they are put into use in the current year. The difference in amortization in 2007-08 (from that budgeted) includes additional equipment purchases of $122,000 at Valley View Centre that were not budgeted, offset by reductions in information technology related spending.

Third-Party Funding

This year, Social Services provided $144 million in funding to third parties, of which the majority was to community-based organizations.[4]

[4] The definition of third parties was changed for 2007-08 and a comparable number for 2006-07 would be $131 million.

For More Information



Saskatchewan Social Services Regional Services

Centre (Saskatoon Office)	306-933-6075
Kindersley Service Centre	306-463-5470
Rosetown Service Centre	306-882-5400
Northeast (Prince Albert)	1-800-487-8603
Creighton Service Centre	1-800-532-9580
La Ronge Service Centre	1-800-567-4066
Melfort Service Centre	1-800-487-8640
Nipawin Service Centre	1-800-487-8594
Northwest (North Battleford)	1-877-993-9911
Buffalo Narrows Service Centre	1-800-667-7685
La Loche Service Centre	1-877-371-1131
Lloydminster Service Centre	1-877-367-7707
Meadow Lake Service Centre	1-877-368-8898
Southeast (Yorkton)	1-877-786-3288
Estevan Service Centre	306-637-4550
Fort Qu'Appelle Service Centre	1-800-667-3260
Weyburn Service Centre	306-848-2404
Southwest (Regina)	306-787-3700
Moose Jaw Service Centre	306-694-3647
Swift Current Service Centre	306-778-8219

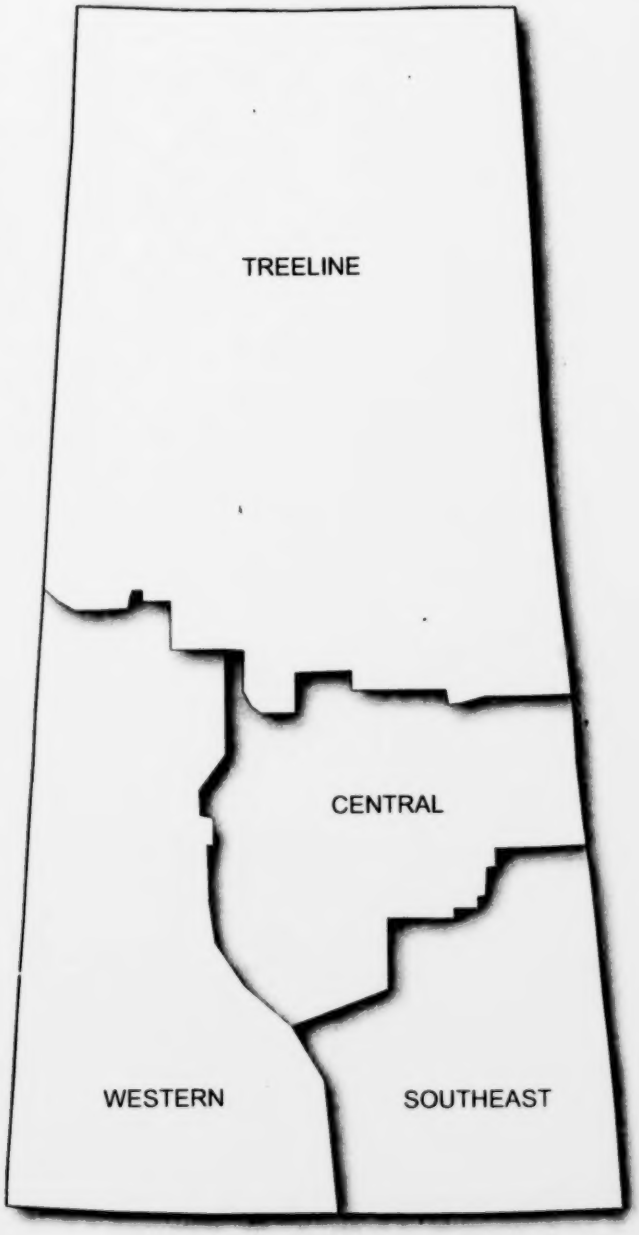
General Inquiries	306-787-3700
Communications and Public Education	306-787-3686
Website:	www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca
E-mail:	communications@cr.gov.sk.ca
Office of Disability Issues	306-787-7283*
	1-877-915-7468*
Contact Centre	306-798-0660
	1-866-701-4578
	306-787-1065*
	1-866-995-0099*

* Numbers are equipped for Hearing Impaired TTY calls.

Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC)

SHC Offices

Prince Albert	306-953-2540
Regina	306-787-4117
Saskatoon	306-933-6292



Appendices

Organizational Structure

The Ministry's organizational structure at the end of the 2007-08 fiscal year was as follows: